UNITED
NATIONS

CEDAW

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.
GENERAL

CEDAW/C/ETH/1-3/Add.1
20 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION
OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Combined initial, second and third
periodic reports of States parties

ETHIOPIA

95-31979 (E) 151295 191295

/...

CONTENTS

		Page
	Abbreviations	4
I.	OVERVIEW	5
II.	SITUATION OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA	6
III.	INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	7
	A. Introduction	7
	B. Background	9
IV.	INEQUALITIES IN SHARING OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING AT ALL LEVELS	11
V.	INSUFFICIENT MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS	13
	A. National machinery	13
	B. National programme of action	16
	C. National policy on Ethiopian women	17
	D. Major objectives of the policy	18
	E. Donors and non-governmental agencies	18
VI.	LACK OF AWARENESS OF AND COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WOMEN'S RIGHTS	19
	A. International commitments	19
	B. Legal status of women	20
	C. Creating awareness	23
VII.	POVERTY	24
VIII.	INEQUALITY IN WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND POLICIES AND THE PRODUCTIVE PROCESS ITSELF	26
IX.	INEQUALITY IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER MEANS TO MAXIMIZE AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND USE OF WOMEN'S CAPACITIES	27
	A. Education of women	27
	B. Access to health	30

CONTENTS (continued)

		Page
	C. Employment	33
X.	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN	34
XI.	EFFECTS OF ONGOING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ARMED OR OTHER KINDS OF CONFLICTS ON WOMEN	35

Annexes

I.	Extract from "But can women win the peace?"	39
II.	Tables	41
III.	References	57

ABBREVIATIONS

CSA	Central Statistical Authority
CERTWID	Centre for Research, Training and Information on Women in Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GDP	gross domestic product
IDR	Institute of Development Research
ILO	International Labour Organization
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ONCCP	Office of the National Committee for Central Planning
REWA	Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association
RRC	Relief and Rehabilitation Commission
SIDA	Swedish International Development Authority
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WID	Women in development

I. OVERVIEW

Ethiopia is classified among the least developed countries. The economic, social and political system is highly underdeveloped. Principally an agrarian economy, agriculture employs over 85 per cent of the population and contributes about 50 per cent of GDP. Per capita income is US$ 120 per annum. The available social services such as health and education do not cover even 50 per cent of the rapidly growing population. Infrastructural services such as power, water supply, sanitation and sewage, roads and other transport facilities are accessible only to a very small portion of the population.

One of the most striking features of Ethiopian society is the low status of women. Social indicators for human development and the quality of life all point to a grim picture. All the available data indicate that women carry a disproportionate burden of coping with poverty and lack visibility, access to services, employment opportunities as well as opportunities for participation and decision-making.

Ethiopia is the third most populous country in Africa, with a population of 54.9 million in 1994. The country's demographic features are characterized by a high fertility rate and slowly declining mortality rate, leading to rapid population growth. During the last decade, the population has grown by about 15 million persons and is expected to reach 66.7 million by the year 2000.

The prevalence of high fertility and high mortality has meant that the age distribution of Ethiopia's population comprises a large number of very young people and relatively few older people. In 1994, the proportions of the population under the age of 15, aged 15-59 and aged 60 and over were 48.6, 46.7 and 4.7 per cent respectively. The median age is 15.2 years. The total population is estimated to grow at 2.9 per cent per annum and the urban population at an average of 4 per cent per annum. 1/

Both the crude birth rate and the total fertility rate indicate that the level of fertility in the country is among the highest in the world and has remained persistently so over the years. The crude birth rate stands at an average of 47.8 per 1,000, while total fertility is estimated at 7.7 children per woman for between the years 1990 and 2000. 2/ Child-bearing starts at an early age. Nearly two thirds of Ethiopian women of reproductive age become mothers before they reach the age of 20.

Children and women constitute about three quarters of Ethiopia's estimated population. Together they form the largest group within the economically and socially deprived section of the country. 3/ Infant and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world. Morbidity patterns indicate that often preventable diseases are rampant, particularly among low socio-economic groups and children and women. 4/

The level of urbanization is very low. As of 1994, only 15 per cent of the population lived in urban areas, concentrated in three major cities. This implies that the remainder lives in relatively smaller towns, whose economic ties with the rural sector remains strong. The population residing in rural areas largely derives its livelihood from subsistence agriculture production

(cereals) in the northern highlands, coffee production in the southern highlands and livestock herding in the pastoral lowlands. Agriculture continues to be the major contributor to GDP. The country's export trade depends very heavily on coffee. On average, coffee provided about 54 per cent of the total export earnings between the years 1978 and 1984 and rose to 55.2 per cent in 1986-1987. The dependency on earnings from a single export crop is an inherent major risk factor for Ethiopia. 5/

II. SITUATION OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA

Women in Ethiopia belong to diverse ethnic and cultural groups; hence they have divergent needs and interests. The critical needs of most rural women can be summarized as ownership of assets, access to productive resources, potable water, fuel, labour-saving devices, markets as well as health care and child-care services. On the other hand, most urban women need access to marketable skills, employment, health and educational facilities, credit, adequate nutrition, cheap sources of energy, etc. Both rural and urban women need gender-specific projects based on national policies and plans, but the approach, priority and emphasis will have to vary.

The role and status of women and men are clearly defined and ascribed by gender and age. Most people derive their livelihood from subsistence agriculture; however, a comprehensive understanding of women's role in agricultural production is limited by lack of data on regional, ethnic and religious factors that affect the gender division of labour in subsistence agriculture. Even more acute is the lack of adequate data on women in the pastoral economy and in livestock management. The scanty data on women in agriculture indicate that women's access to property and other productive resources varies significantly from one ethnic and religious group to another. 6/

In spite of regional and ethnic diversities, certain agricultural tasks are undertaken by women. These include weeding, vegetable gardening, harvesting, processing, storage, milking and caring for poultry and small livestock. The level and type of participation of women in agriculture depends principally on the type of farm technology being used. For example, in cereal-growing areas, where the plough is the major means of cultivation, ploughing and sowing are exclusively male activities. In areas where hoe-based cultivation is predominant, women participate in all farm activities except sowing. In this regard, what is important to note is that ploughing and sowing are socially valued much more than all the other activities in which women are actively engaged. Accordingly it is the men who are perceived as farmers and decision makers. Women are considered as help-mates to the head of the household. While men's status is earned on the basis of their productive roles, the society measures women's worth by their role in reproduction. The emergence of a monetary economy and cash-cropping provided men with new opportunities and further reinforced their superior status. 7/

In addition to clearly defined tasks and responsibilities, men and women are required to observe a considerable social distance. 8/ In general terms, women are considered subordinate to men. Although women contribute

significantly to the economic development of the country, they lack recognition and the knowledge and awareness of their rights and privileges as citizens. In most cases, women are denied access to technology and innovative training. However, the magnitude of underdevelopment in Ethiopia is such that access to technology is limited to a small portion of the urban population.

Women in Ethiopia, as elsewhere in the world, bear the primary responsibility for the health, nourishment, upbringing and basic education and attitude of the next generation. Illiterate mothers cannot teach their children what they themselves do not know. The vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and frequent child-bearing continues unless new opportunities, values and ideas are promoted. Recognizing women's contribution to the economy, culture and welfare of society as well as to all social practices changes the attitudes and standards of the coming generation. Yet in spite of women's significant contribution to the country's economy, culture and other aspects of life, they remain subordinate and are prevented from receiving a fair share of the country's resources. 9/

Women have suffered greatly as a result of internal conflict and recurrent drought. Bearing the brunt of domestic chores, they are traditionally relegated to an inferior social and economic status. They enjoy little control over resources, are the main caregivers in households, undertake arduous tasks of fetching water and fuelwood and also engage in agricultural activities. The escalation of war added more family responsibilities during a time of anxiety and fear for the safety of husbands, sons and other relatives. An equally devastating experience was brought about by the ravages of famine. Large numbers of poor women witnessed the death of their children and were forced to live a life of total dependency in relief camps. Recently, the number of displaced women has increased. 10/ Demobilization left ex-soldiers, who were mostly men, without a means of livelihood, thereby affecting the lives of their families. Returnee families have settled in temporary shelters as have many others uprooted by drought or poor security conditions. These women have had to abandon their normal lives and face an insecure future. 11/

Despite the fact that Ethiopian women constitute almost half of the population, they lag behind men in their participation in public life and are the most burdened population groups. They lack decision-making power and have little or no education, leading to a low level of consciousness, low income and low access to the limited health services. They also lack access to productive assets and appropriate technologies to ease their daily work burden. In addition they are negatively affected by harmful traditional attitudes and practices buttressed by legal institutions. 12/

III. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A. Introduction

Attempts at understanding the causes of the low status of women globally have been an incremental process based on the introduction of fresh perspectives and identification of feasible means of changing the situation. Initially, elements related to traditional norms, values and attitudes were identified as

the main factors in a culture relegating women to inferior status and thereby marginalizing them. Then the focus shifted to the link between women's issues and development programmes.

Advocates of women's rights highlighted women's contribution to the economy and their role as active partners in development. Similarly, following the Bucharest Population Conference of 1974, there emerged a debate that linked poverty and population growth. These concerns gave rise to the women-in-development (WID) approach, which was popularized and institutionalized during the First United Nations Decade for Women (1975-1985). Following the Mexico Conference of 1975, national machineries such as women's bureaux or women's desks in government offices and donor agencies were set up.

In the early phase, there were two policy options being discussed. One was the equity approach, with its emphasis on gender equity through the redistribution of resources from men to women. Calls were also made for women's legal and political rights as well as the right to equal participation and reward. The second was the anti-poverty approach, which prioritized improving the position of poor women. Poverty among women was conceived as a product of past failures to acknowledge women's contribution to development. This approach recognized women's vital role, both in the economy and in providing for the needs of their households. Women became a critical target group of development. Advocates called for improvement in women's access to employment, particularly to productive resources, contraception and family planning.

By 1980, with the deepening economic crisis, the efficiency approach came to dominate the WID discourse. Proponents of this approach argued that the failure to mobilize women's economic participation translated into the underutilization of a country's valuable economic resource. Women's greater involvement in income-generating activities and their increased participation in providing basic community services were major preoccupations. Those who challenged the efficiency approach advocated the empowerment approach. This approach emphasized self-reliance, which is achieved through bottom-up mobilization around women's practical needs. They can thus overcome their disadvantages in getting access to and control over resources and win a place in decision-making. By 1990, the empowerment approach had become the language of mainstream development discourse.

Major shifts in development thinking have also occurred as a result of global concerns with rapid population growth, environmental degradation and widespread poverty. These concerns have led to the human development approach and a preoccupation with sustainable development. In the meantime, the exclusive focus on women was found to be inadequate and hence the shift to the gender approach. The socially constructed roles of men and women vary in each society and particular historical context. It is not sufficient to understand the different tasks performed by men and women but also the value accorded to those tasks. It is those values that determine the status of men and women in society and their access to and control over resources such as income and decision-making power. If development is to be sustainable, the multiple responsibilities of both men and women will have to be taken into account.

The Fourth United Nations World Conference on women, equality, development and peace will be taking a hard look at how far women have progressed in the 20 years since the first World Conference was held in 1975, when the improvement of the status of women became an item on the global agenda. In the majority of cases, progress has been slow. Women's fundamental role in the society is still often overlooked and underrated. However, the awareness of the existence, causes and persistence of gender disparities has certainly grown globally and a few gains have been made.

The Beijing Conference will provide the opportunity to assess how much has been achieved to bring out women's strengths, skills and talents and to move on from there to achieve the goals set for the Decade. For there is no development without peace, nor could there be any success in the struggle for equality and democratic rights, the main theme of the Conference. Equality, development and peace have a tremendous significance in Ethiopia, for Ethiopian women and the rest of the population suffered a great deal under the past war-mongering Government.

B. Background

It was in 1946 that the United Nations resolved to eliminate gender discrimination, but the 1975 Mexico Conference marked a new departure with its focus on International Women's Year. The Conference summarized three decades (1946-1974) of calls for equality between sexes. The International Women's Year inaugurated a decade (1976-1985) during which elements oppressive to women on grounds of gender were isolated and mechanisms for dealing with factors hindering the overall integration of women in development were identified.

The United Nations Decade for Women had as its goal equality, development and peace, with emphasis on education, employment and health. The World Plan of Action for the implementation of the objectives of International Women's Year, which was adopted in Mexico in 1975, was aimed at achieving the Decade's goals. The Plan of Action outlined the major priority areas as regards the situation of women. 13/

More significantly, the First United Nations Decade for Women provided the opportunity to focus on the multiplicity of problems women faced and to identify ways through which women could be integrated in development. In those countries where research and public discussion of women's issues were not common, the most significant outcome of the Decade was the variety of forums it provided women to meet, discuss problems and explore solutions. Most important of all was the possibility that the Decade provided women of organizing nationally, regionally and globally.

In retrospect, what women had achieved during the first Decade was an incredible ability to articulate their needs as well as formulate alternative models of global, regional and country-specific developments. In Africa, the preparatory meetings for the Mid-Decade Conference of 1980 as well as those leading to the Nairobi Conference had firmly institutionalized WID in all development agendas. The Nairobi Conference provided an opportunity to undertake a review and appraisal of the achievement of the Decade. The general

consensus was that women in most countries had made very little progress in terms of education, employment and health. That the goals of the Decade - development, equality and peace - were still elusive. In fact the economic crisis had, in many countries, eroded some of the gains women had acquired in the 1960s and 1970s. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, adopted as a commitment by States Members of the United Nations, outlined concrete proposals and actions to be followed between 1985-2000 to ensure the goals of development, equality and peace.

In appraising the goals of the first two Decades, the case of Ethiopia clearly reveals that women suffered disproportionately from the decline in economic development on the one hand and gender discrimination on the other. Major indicators of gender disparities in Ethiopia include: 14/

(a) National statistics undercount the participation of rural women in the labour force in spite of their substantive contribution to agriculture and the economy as a whole;

(b) A very low percentage of females work in professional, technical, administrative and managerial groups;

(c) Females constitute about 30 per cent of the employees of manufacturing industries, receiving only 21 per cent of wages and salaries;

(d) Though improving, very wide gaps remain between male and female access to educational opportunities, with females falling well behind males. Out of 100 grade one female entrants, only 12 completed grade 12;

(e) Despite improvements in the availability of health facilities and manpower training, the health status of women is appalling in that:

(i) Maternal malnutrition was estimated to be in the range of 10 per cent to 60 per cent;

(ii) Maternal mortality is the highest among low-income African countries;

(f) The fertility rate was 38 per cent higher than the average performance of all low-income countries combined;

(g) Almost 98 per cent of women of reproductive age lack the knowledge of the danger of pregnancies that are too frequent, or too early or too late in life;

(h) Though differing from culture to culture and from region to region, 60 per cent of the Ethiopian population suffers from harmful traditional practices. These practices are much more harmful to women than to men;

(i) The majority of working women are forced to live and work in congested one-room dwellings poorly provided with life's amenities;

(j) Women lack access to resources critical to meeting their strategic and practical needs effectively and efficiently (e.g. legislation, gender-sensitive policies, credits and autonomous women's associations, etc.);

(k) Laws such as the family code and pension law were discriminatory towards women.

The constraints resulting from this phenomenal inequality of Ethiopian women by and large can be grouped into socio-cultural factors; formal laws; extensive government intervention in the economic system; and a strong male bias in State-supported services, which systematically blocks women's access to critical knowledge and inputs. Resources in these areas could help them to increase their productivity and boost their confidence. In the context of the democratization process taking place in the country, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia has taken concrete measures to address gender disparities. These include the creation of a strong national machinery, a number of gender-sensitive policies and an enabling environment for advocacy.

IV. INEQUALITIES IN SHARING OF POWER AND DECISION-MAKING AT ALL LEVELS

In Ethiopia, decision-making power could be said to exist at various levels, ranging from the central government structure to those structures mandated to oversee community participation in both urban and rural areas. All existing data indicate that women's participation in the power-sharing and decision-making at these various levels have been minimal. The main explanation for women's absence from decision-making power is the patriarchal value system, which discourages women's presence in the public arena. In most parts of Ethiopia, women are faced with strong cultural inhibitions against discussing issues in public with men. Moreover, women's absence from decision-making arenas is also a reflection of discriminatory legislation and their lack of access to education and economic empowerment.

In terms of political decision-making, most women are excluded from public policy-making. Women have enjoyed the right to vote and to be elected since 1969. In the 1973 election of deputies, women accounted for only 3.2 per cent of those elected. In the election of deputies of 1987, the proportion of women deputies increased to 6.4 per cent. In August 1995, Ethiopia became a Federal Democratic Republic with two federal councils: the Council of Peoples' Representatives and the Federal Council. Preliminary returns of parliamentary elections indicate that, in the Council of Peoples' Representatives, 10 per cent of those elected were women: in the Federal Council, 70 females were elected.

Women's participation in the Government, i.e. as ministers, deputy, vice- or assistant ministers and directors of government departments has been extremely low. Throughout the 1980s, there was only one female deputy minister who served only for a few years. During the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, from July 1991 to August 1995, there were a total of four women ministers and two deputy ministers. Reliable data are not available on the number of female directors of government departments. According to the Ministry of Labour Statistics, in 1980, out of a total of 56 administrative and

managerial posts allocated, 4 were occupied by women or about 7 per cent. Since then the number of women placed in the administration and management group registered a decline. Presently, however, there are 20 female appointees at managerial levels in government ministries and institutions and approximately 20 at department-head levels. As for women's participation in foreign affairs, since the late 1980s to the installation of the new Government, there were only two female ambassadors.

In Ethiopia, other decision-making bodies include the peasants' associations and the urban dwellers associations, where most community matters are decided. Women's decision-making structures in both these associations range from negligible to non-existence. In the peasants' associations, it is estimated that women make up only 12 per cent of the membership and are not in the leadership. In fact, most of those who are members are female heads of households or those engaged in small business. There are parallel peasant women's associations to which most women belong, but these associations do not get involved in major decisions and are clearly subservient to the peasants' associations.

Agricultural services were channelled through service cooperatives. These services include the extension of credit, agriculture inputs and provision of basic consumer goods. These corporations also operated flour mills and grain-storage facilities, constructed social facilities and organized cottage industries. Women constituted only 7.5 per cent of the membership. Hence women had very limited access to credit schemes and lacked access to skills training. Although gender-disaggregated data on the leadership of the urban dwellers' associations are not available, until the most recent elections of August 1995, only a few have been elected to the lower ranks of the leadership. During the recent elections, it was decided that the leadership of the urban dwellers' associations should consist of three members, two of whom would be female.

In the urban areas, decisions affecting large communities are made by the private sector, where the percentage of female entrepreneurs is still very low but is becoming more visible. In 1983, a survey of 46,484 single-ownership, single-physical location enterprises engaging a total of 86,008 workers indicated that only 12 per cent of the proprietors, active partners or involved family members were female. In 1989, it was reported that there were 7,684 female licensed entrepreneurs nationwide, employing more than 36,000 individuals. Moreover, women's dominance in the wholesale and retail trade, restaurant and hotel business can be explained by the fact that most beauty shops are operated by women as well as at least half of the laundry services.

However, women's involvement in the private small-scale industrial sector is disappointingly low both as proprietors and as employees, even in those sectors that are traditionally considered as women's occupations such as handicrafts. For example out of a total of 853 handicraft cooperatives, only 10 were all-female. In the remaining 842 cooperatives, with a membership in excess of 36,000, women were reported to account for less than 5,000.

V. INSUFFICIENT MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AT ALL LEVELS

Since the early 1970s and 1980s, with the rebirth of movements for women's rights, national and international attention has focused on women. The declaration of the United Nations Decade for Women brought not only statements from government representatives and women leaders about the importance of women in every aspect of social life but facilitated the emergence of advocacy groups that lobbied for improvements in women's education, economic situation, social status and political participation.

A. National machineries

At the level of rhetoric, the 1976 programme for the national democratic revolution in Ethiopia stressed the equality of women, confirmed their rights and duties and rejected all social norms and practices that had subordinated women to manifold oppressive conditions. In 1980, the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) was formed. Specifically it was charged with:

(a) Raising women's political consciousness through the propagation of Marxism-Leninism;

(b) Preparing women to become active participants in Socialist production;

(c) Ensuring protection of the rights of women as mothers;

(d) Preparing women to attain political, economic and social independence and participate in the building of Socialist Ethiopia.

The powers and duties of REWA included the mobilization of women "to defend their motherland from reactionary forces" and the eradication of "cultures, customs and practices that deny women human rights". REWA was decreed as the only women's organization and remained so for over a decade. It had no power to influence government policy. None the less, it had branches in all urban dwellers associations, known as kebeles, as well as in each peasants' association. Membership and membership fees were compulsory.

It was only in the late 1980s that a number of women's affair units were established in government offices such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Office of the National Committee for Central Planning and Addis Ababa University. It is therefore only recently that people working in the field of development have become visibly concerned about gender biases in development and the resultant differences in income and economic power between men and women.

Furthermore, previous approaches to integrate women in development through increased participation of women in economic and social activities are currently being challenged. It is found that generally women's status has not been fundamentally altered and that the benefits of increased participation have at best been minimal.

The political and economic system put in place by the former Government, which lasted from 1974 to 1991, was extremely oppressive, unjust and prioritized war as a solution to political conflicts. The centralized economy and war-focused policies aggravated famines and resulted in tension, massive deaths, displacement and forced internal and external migration. The principal role of the women's organization was to mobilize Ethiopian women to play an active role in the war as both combatants and supporters of the war effort.

This legacy of mobilizing women by force is likely to remain a major obstacle in soliciting women's participation in development efforts. The national focus has now shifted to paying special attention to women's participation in the development process, in the sharing of resources equally with men and in changing society. 15/

Previously, the lack of a government policy on women had hindered the creation of a coordinating body that could play a role in organizing and enhancing the efforts of development agencies that wanted to assist Ethiopian women. Although there were numerous interventions by donor organizations in the past, they were not well coordinated and did little to help to alleviate the plight of women. The reason for the lack of coordination was the Government's failure to facilitate donor activities.

REWA, which was the only organization concerned with women's affairs under the former Government, was involved mainly in propaganda activities and was unable to come up with any real solution to women's problems. 16/ The lesson learned from such negative experiences is that having only one national organization for women does little or nothing to further their causes. Therefore, the Government should create an enabling environment for the formation and smooth functioning of professional associations as well as issue-based organizations that would permit women to address their multiple problems and explore innovative and viable solutions. It is believed that the national policy on women will help to build an environment that will allow women to help themselves. 17/

Several studies conducted so far have concluded that one of the major obstacles to addressing women's needs has been the lack of a national policy on women. This lack of direction in women's issues has led many development and donor agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to conduct programmes of development assistance to women in an unfocused, uncoordinated and thinly spread manner. This in turn has led to overlaps in projects and in the allocation of much needed resources, resulting in little or no visible effect on the improvement of the quality of life of Ethiopian women. There is a glaring absence of women in decision-making roles at all levels of development activities.

It was in response to this urgent need that the Transitional Government established a Women's Affairs Office in the Prime Minister's Office. The Women's Affairs Office officially started to function on 1 October 1992. 18/ Located within the highest organ of government and headed by a Minister, the Women's Affairs Office has the following objectives and mandates.

(a) Objectives of the Women's Affairs Office

(i) To encourage women to organize themselves;

(ii) To coordinate agencies and activities addressing women's issues;

(iii) To ensure that gender needs and priorities are reflected in programme/project formulation, implementation and monitoring;

(iv) To monitor the extent of women's access to resources and opportunities and control thereof;

(v) To facilitate the creation of an enabling environment;

(vi) To become a link between government sectors, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies and self-help schemes.

(b) Mandate of the Women's Affairs Office

(i) To articulate policies;

(ii) To serve as a link between government WID departments;

(iii) To have an impact on high-level decision makers, development and donor agencies, NGOs and self-help schemes;

(iv) To coordinate efforts of agencies that are interested in designing programmes/projects benefiting women. 19/

The implementation of these objectives and mandates will be facilitated by the creation of a technical women's department in each strategic government agency. To date, such focal points have been established in a number of strategic agencies such as the Central Statistics Authority, the Ministries of Planning and Economic Development, Education, Natural Resources and Environment, Agriculture, Justice, Labour and Social Affairs, Relief and Rehabilitation, Industry and Water Resources and the Civil Service Commission. Such departments will promote the following objectives:

(a) Design and see to it that sectoral projects/programmes enhance women's contribution to national development efforts;

(b) Ensure that female employees of the respective agencies have equal access to the opportunities provided by the employer organization;

(c) Follow up and monitor the implementation of the policy at the ministerial, regional and national levels.

B. National programme of action

Building a strong national machinery and efforts to help Ethiopian women to organize for themselves formed part of the national programme of action with distinct objectives and operational strategies.

Among the major objectives of the national programme of action are increasing female labour force participation in non-agricultural industries and occupations, decreasing women's economic dependence on men, decreasing women's workload and controlling inflationary pressures in the economy as such pressures undercut the growth in the real income of women.

Appropriate strategies have been formulated in order to facilitate the operationalization of projects that are sensitive to women's needs within the mainstream development processes. These efforts have entailed the identification of about 10 ongoing projects and 9 new programmes at the national level. Among existing programmes are:

(a) Strengthening interministerial relations on gender;

(b) Formulation of gender-sensitive policy;

(c) Planning and implementation of gender-sensitive programmes in nutrition and maternal health care;

(d) National literacy programme (improving and expanding educational projects);

(e) Relief and settlement assistance to displaced women with emphasis on female-headed households;

(f) Identifying and financing economic programmes that would address income problems of women.

Among the new programmes are:

(a) Legal reform;

(b) Gender-awareness training for government employees;

(c) Public information and education;

(d) Workshops on culture and tradition;

(e) Child-care facilities for working women, etc. 20/

The operationalization of the aforementioned projects is envisaged to take place within a 10-year period (1993-2002) and estimated to cost a total of US$ 17.3 million. The Ethiopian Government has already earmarked 50 per cent of the budget required and 50 per cent is solicited from donors.

However, the successful implementation of the national plan of action will depend on the degree to which society struggles against underdevelopment, poverty, the recurrent drought and famine and population growth as well as other social and cultural constraints. In this regard, the potential role of Ethiopian women in bringing about solutions to these problems is tremendous and deserves support.

One of the keys to the advancement of women involves strengthening the participation and presence of women in decision-making and increasing the impact that programmes and projects have on their quality of life. 21/ The Transitional Government encourages Ethiopian women to take advantage of the current democratization process.

C. National policy on Ethiopian women

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia is determined to create an enabling environment for women by having an all-encompassing policy on women's affairs. Ethiopia is also a signatory to many international conventions on women's issues, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is, therefore, necessary to have a national policy on women that has the unreserved support of all groups and organizations. 22/

Women's issues and concerns will be taken into account in the development programmes that are initiated and undertaken by central and regional government structures. A share of the annual budget will be allocated to women's affairs by each government office and institution. 23/

The Transitional Government has formulated a national policy on Ethiopian women that encourages the integration of gender issues in the overall development programme of the country, believing that development can be achieved only through peace and equality of all people and in particular through the equality of women. Moreover, the democratization process can be fully developed only if women are given the opportunity for equal participation. 24/

The national policy on Ethiopian women aims at achieving the following goals:

(a) To ensure and respect women's right to equality in every aspect of life;

(b) To create an environment that will enable women to initiate ideas and participate in the formulation and implementation of development and economic plans equally;

(c) To eliminate, step by step, centuries-old gender-based discriminatory attitudes and practices towards women;

(d) To ensure the supply of basic services necessary for women, as well as for the overall development of society. 25/

D. Major objectives of the policy

The major objectives of the policy are to institutionalize the political, economic and social rights of women by creating appropriate structures in government offices and institutions, so that:

(a) Laws, regulations, systems and development plans that are issued by the Government should ensure the equality of men and women, with particular emphasis given to the participation of rural women;

(b) Economic, social and political policies and programmes as well as cultural and traditional practices and activities should ensure equal access of men and women to the country's resources and the decision-making process and benefit fully from all activities carried out by institution at all levels;

(c) Development institutions, programmes and projects should ensure women's access to and involvement in all interventions and activities. 26/

The major mandates of the Women's Affairs Office and those that are currently receiving emphasis include:

(a) Women's legal rights and legal protection;

(b) Women's rights in agriculture and related training and services;

(c) Provision of information and education pertaining to voluntary family planning and child care;

(d) Ensuring women's right to education, job opportunities, salaries and pensions;

(e) Strengthening women's participation in decision-making, starting from community level up to the higher levels;

(f) Ensuring women's right to credit and all other related services;

(g) Provision of education, training and information pertaining to forestry and sustainable environment;

(h) Creating and developing every opportunity to enable women to overcome poverty;

(i) Documenting the role that women played in the struggle for peace, democracy and justice and their roles in the various ethnic groups. 27/

E. Donors and non-governmental agencies

Several bilateral donors and multilateral agencies have established WID units that have worked to create an awareness about WID in programmes or have instituted policies concerning gender issues for development programming. However there is little coordination between donor units, resulting in minimal

information dissemination. Moreover, regular evaluation of grass-roots projects are not undertaken, and inadequate impact evaluation is undertaken. In most cases, the stated objectives of women's projects fail to materialize and some projects even tend to generate negative consequences. NGOs rarely have their own policies on gender issues. Frequently, acquiescence is given to a donor's policy without serious planning at the project level and with no evaluation of the impact on people's life. 28/

As a result of the overall enabling environment for focusing on gender issues as evidenced by the national policy on Ethiopian women and the coordination efforts of the Women's Affairs Office, this trend is likely to change in the near future. Most United Nations agencies in the country are collaborating with the Women's Affairs Office in terms of capacity-building, focusing on the needs of gender focal points in each Ministry as well as covering expenses of workshops, seminars, consultants, training, etc.

VI. LACK OF AWARENESS OF AND COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONALLY AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED WOMEN'S RIGHTS

A. International commitments

Ethiopia has ratified some of the major international conventions on women's rights and has failed to ratify others. In 1966, Ethiopia ratified the Convention concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation. The Convention on the Political Rights of Women was ratified in 1969 as well as the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery. The Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others was ratified in 1981, with reservation. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was also ratified in 1981. Since 1975, Ethiopia has participated in all the international and regional United Nations conferences on women and made commitments towards the implementation of the various plans of action.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is not a party to the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages. Nor is the country signatory to the Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value. Similarly, Ethiopia has not ratified the Convention against Discrimination in Education. Experience has shown that there is a wide gap between ratification of and commitment to international and nationally recognized women's rights. In Ethiopia, thus far only some provisions of international conventions regarding the elimination of discrimination have been implemented. As far as national legislation is concerned, even when the Constitution contains the principles of equal rights of men and women, it has not been followed by the repeal of discriminatory aspects of Ethiopian private law. 29/

B. Legal status of women

To date, Ethiopia has enacted four Constitutions. The Constitution of 1931, the 1955 Revised Constitution, the 1987 Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the 1994 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The first Ethiopian legal instrument containing the principle of non-discrimination on the ground of sex was the 1987 Constitution. This Constitution provided equality in all fields - legal, political, social, economic and cultural. It also provided for preferential treatment in favour of women by way of special support in education, training and employment. This was intended to allow women to participate in political, economic, social and cultural affairs on an equal basis with men.

The Constitution also guaranteed health services, adequate rest periods and suitable working conditions during pregnancy and maternity. In terms of marriage, the 1987 Constitution provides that marriage requires the consent of a man and a woman who have attained majority. It also stated that "spouses have equal rights in family relations". However, both these provisions contradict provisions in the Civil Code. As far as consent is concerned, the notion of "majority" has always been controversial in Ethiopia. 30/ The Constitution failed to define what is meant by majority. According to the Civil Code, a female is deemed capable of giving consent at the age of 15 while the male can do so only at 18.

Similarly, the provision regarding equal rights in family relations ignores the violation of these principles by several provisions that discriminate against the wife. The Civil Code that is still in force states:

> "A person under disability" means any person under the age of 18 years, any female and any person of unsound mind.
>
> "A person under disability shall sue and be sued in the name of a representative who, in the case of an infant shall be his parent or next of kin, in the case of a female her husband or any person nominated by her and in the case of unsound mind the parent or next of kin. In case of need the court will appoint a representative."

Moreover,

(a) The husband is the head of the family (art. 635). The wife owes him obedience in all lawful things that he orders (subart. 2);

(b) The common residence shall be chosen by the husband (art. 641);

(c) The husband owes protection to his wife (art. 644). He may watch over her relatives and guide her conduct (subart. 2);

(d) Common property shall be administered by the husband (art. 656). A widowed husband can get only his wife's income and cannot claim his wife's pension rights. 31/

The 1987 Constitution failed to repeal discriminatory provisions in the Civil Code. In addition, discriminatory views of women embedded in cultural practices and religious laws were also left intact. Thus the Family Code, employment laws and other laws such as the nationalization proclamation were premised on women's subordinate status. In most cases the abolition of discrimination against women remained an often repeated rhetoric rather than a legal reality.

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia was established in July 1991. The new Government established a Transitional Period Charter, which served as the supreme law for the duration of the transitional period that came to an end in late August 1995. Both the Charter and the new Constitution clearly state that the fundamental rights and liberties contained in these documents "shall be interpreted in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ... other international instruments which Ethiopia has accepted or ratified". This explicit commitment to internationally recognized human rights offers new opportunities as far as commitments to women's rights are concerned. Moreover, the new Constitution explicitly states that "any law, customary practice or act of an agency of government or official that contravenes the Constitution is invalid". As far as women's rights are concerned, article 35 of the new Constitution is entitled "Rights of women" and states:

"1. Women have the right to equal rights with men in the enjoyment and protection of rights provided for by this Constitution.

"2. Women are entitled to equality with men in marriage as prescribed by the Constitution.

"3. In recognition of the history of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia, women are entitled to remedial and affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to enable women to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, economic and social life, and to gain access to opportunities and positions in public and private institutions.

"4. Women have the right to protection by the State from harmful customs. Laws, customs and practices that oppress women or cause bodily or mental harm to them are prohibited.

"5. (a) Women have the right to maternity leave with full pay. The duration of maternity leave shall be determined by law, taking into account the nature of the work, the health of the mother and the welfare of the family;

"(b) Maternity leave may be in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, including prenatal leave with full pay.

"6. Women have the right to participate in the formulation of national development policies, the execution of projects and full consultation in the preparation of projects, particularly those affecting the interests of women.

"7. Women have the right to acquire, administer, control transfer and benefit from property. In particular they have equal rights with men with respect to access, use, administration and transfer of land. They shall also enjoy equal treatment in the inheritance of property.

"8. Women shall have the right to equality in employment, promotion, pay and the entitlement to bequeath pensions.

"9. To protect against harm arising from bearing or giving birth to a child and in order to safeguard their health, women have the right to information and to means that would enable them to plan their families."

Further, under labour rights, article 42, 1 (d) of the Constitution states "women workers have the right to equal pay for comparable work".

Thus far the Government has put in place a strong national machinery for the promotion of women's rights and has formulated a national policy as well as other supplementary gender-sensitive policies and has included the principle of equality between the sexes in the national Constitution.

During the most recent constitution-making process in the country, women played an active role. The Women's Affairs Office ensured that, out of the 14 civic seats, 3 were reserved for women. The women's organization nominated and selected three women representatives from the different women's organizations as members of the Ethiopian Constitution-Drafting Commission. These representatives were mandated to make inputs regarding various aspects of women's rights and put forward women's ideas and interests in the Constitution. 32/

In addition, the office organized a workshop with participants from all regions and government ministries to discuss the draft Constitution and women in order to avoid gender biases embedded in previous Constitutions of Ethiopia. The workshop facilitated the participation of many more women from various regions and institutions as well as mobilizing their inputs to the new Constitution. It culminated in an adoption of a plan of action. In order to formulate and implement the plan of action, it was believed that it would be essential to form an advisory committee. Meanwhile the committees are formed at the regional and zonal levels and at the community level as well. This structure is believed to facilitate the flow of ideas from the grass-roots level to the top, while simultaneously making it possible to follow up the progress of the actual participation of women in the drafting of the Constitution. In the June 1992 election to regional offices, women participated in voting and some also ran for office. This is because the Transitional Government has accepted the fact that every woman at the age of 18 can vote and at the age of 21 run for elective office. Yet the problem may arise that millions of Ethiopian women do not understand the significance of the franchise, for they think and believe that politics is the domain of the men.

This situation can be improved by letting women be organized, sensitized as well as being made aware about their rights, following which a better outcome

can be anticipated from women's participation in the upcoming election in Ethiopia 33/ (see table 5).

C. Creating awareness

Various attempts had been made to alter the present picture of Ethiopian women. These range from a women's welfare association to forced, politically oriented women's associations. But, with the lack of substantive commitments and haphazard approaches to the problems, these measures failed to ameliorate the status of women and bring about changes in the living standards of women.

The change of Government of Ethiopia has ushered in new experiences and challenges. Presently, gender issues are being discussed at national policy levels, resources are earmarked for the implementation of gender-sensitive policies and awareness creation and gender sensitization is being carried out by the media, NGOs, training institutions and the women's affairs offices in government ministries. These take the form of workshops, seminars, symposiums and short-term training. The media carry regular features of concern to women. The Women's Affairs Office in the Ministry of Information also monitors gender biases in other programmes such as the biased images of women in television plays and suggests a more balanced alternative image of women.

These activities highlight the problems and sharpen public awareness of gender issues. On the other hand, researchers have begun to show increased interest in carrying out research on gender issues. A case in point is the launching of a programme of research grants by the Centre for Research, Training and Information for Women in Development (CERTWID). It is hoped that this effort will generate information on a much-neglected aspect of social reality in the country. Research into various aspects of gender issues is a critical component of awareness creation and ought to be encouraged. To date, CERTWID has provided research grants to the following areas:

(a) Female-headed farm households in Ethiopia - access to and management of resources;

(b) Women rural poverty and famine;

(c) Educational wastage - the case of female students in selected primary and secondary schools of Ethiopia;

(d) Female labour force status and fertility in urban Ethiopia;

(e) The economic and social problems of divorced women in Addis Ababa;

(f) The status of female nurses in Ethiopia;

(g) The working conditions, benefits and rights of domestic servants in Addis Ababa;

(h) Cultural dynamics and gender issues (carried out through interdepartmental collaboration in Addis Ababa University).

CERTWID has initiated a WID documentation centre that has started collecting national and international documentation on gender issues. In recognition of its major responsibilities in awareness creation, the Women's Affairs Office set the following objectives for 1994 (see tables 4, 6 and 7):

(a) Building the institutional capacity of the Women's Affairs Office at all levels to enhance the implementation of the national policy of Ethiopian women;

(b) Organize and establish regional and sectoral WID offices;

(c) Strengthen existing WID offices;

(d) Assist and facilitate multiplier effects in increasing women's organizations and women's professional associations;

(e) Provide funding, i.e., revolving funds, to develop credit schemes;

(f) Create awareness among women in order for them to participate in the preparation of the Constitution to ensure the incorporation of the most crucial women's issues;

(g) Create awareness among women to participate in the election process.

Experience has shown that constitutional and legal changes as well as supportive policies have to be complemented at the local level by building up women's capacity to claim the new rights attained.

VII. POVERTY

In Ethiopia, the level of poverty is alarming and yet it is also perhaps one of the least studied social issues in Ethiopia. More disturbing is the fact that the gender dimension of poverty has not yet received the attention that it deserves. The scanty data that do exist all point to the fact that poor women bear the brunt of impoverishment mainly by virtue of their subordinate status in society. The 1990 UNDP Human Development Report estimated that 60 per cent of the urban population and 65 per cent of the rural population live below the poverty line.

In rural areas, poverty results from insufficiency of land holding, declining agricultural production and low consumption. These problems are exacerbated by highly limited off-farm employment and the high incidence of natural disasters. It is estimated that about 30 per cent of the sedentary rural population is chronically poor. These households have less than half a hectare of land and most do not own a single ox for ploughing. Almost all the nomadic population are either chronically poor or extremely vulnerable. Environmental problems resulting from deforestation, land degradation and declining agricultural productivity have aggravated the level of rural poverty.

Poverty has also been aggravated by numerous repressive policies of the previous Government, including forced collectivization, massive forced

resettlement and villagization programmes, establishing State farms on prime farm land, fixed prices for agricultural produce and other measures that created a sense of insecurity and eroded incentives for increased production. The cumulative effect of all these policies is a severe lack of food security and overall impoverishment of the population. 34/ Rural households are increasingly forced to generate income from off-farm employment. However, for most rural producers, these activities generate only a small addition to their meagre income.

In urban areas, the major cause of poverty is the high level of unemployment and underemployment. Unemployment is highest among the 20-24-year age group. The opportunities for employment are limited for both men and women. However, employment opportunities are much lower for women. The rapid growth of the population continues to add strains on the environment and makes it difficult to keep up with the growing numbers of people needing employment, food, shelter, education, water and sanitation.

Data presented by the World Bank on urban poverty provide a gloomy picture of widespread deprivation among the urban population. 35/ In 1987, 65 per cent of households in Addis Ababa (based on an average of 5.5 persons per household) lived below the absolute poverty threshold. More alarming still is the fact that urban deprivation in small towns is even greater. For example, in Assela, a town of 40,100 inhabitants in 1988, and in Shashamene, a town of 41,300, the level of absolute poverty was 79 per cent. The study goes on to note that on the average nearly 80 per cent of urban household expenditure in Ethiopia is on basic food supplies and fuel alone.

In both rural and urban areas, women are most adversely affected by poverty. Most rural women have no access to land, credit or other productive resources. Poverty exacerbates intra-household inequalities. Rural women are faced with long working days. In addition to productive activities, they have to perform numerous arduous tasks such as fetching water and fuel, grinding cereals, food preparation, household maintenance and child care. Environmental degradation in the form of drought and deforestation has increased women's workload as they have to travel long distances and spend a lot of time fetching fuel and water. The need for additional off-farm income further increases women's workload. Women's response to widespread impoverishment in the rural areas has been increased involvement in income-generating activities or increased migration to towns.

In general, the growing impoverishment in both rural and urban areas has meant increased labour force participation by women and children, increased levels of divorce, abandonment by male breadwinners and a significant increase in female-headed households. The ratio of female-headed households in urban areas is estimated at 35 per cent. Both large and small towns in Ethiopia tend to contain more women than men. The only employment opportunities available to women in towns are domestic work, prostitution, selling local drinks and petty trading. The income from these activities is extremely low. Women's poverty also translates into intergenerational transmission of poverty.

Widespread poverty and the increasing numbers of female-headed households has aggravated the malnutrition of children, with its attendant consequences.

Child mortality and morbidity are very high in Ethiopia. This is often related to women's lack of resources and lack of educational opportunities. Data from all over the world have indicated that education is a means of overcoming poverty, increasing income, improving nutrition and health, reducing family size, raising people's self-confidence and enriching their quality of life.

Children of educated mothers do not suffer from malnutrition or preventable diseases. The poverty of large numbers of households and especially that of women has also meant inability to send children to school, particularly female children. Poverty and gender subordination produce a vicious circle for women: because women are overworked, they seek the help of their daughters. This deprives the girls of schooling and they in turn are handicapped in relation to vocational and other types of training and income-generating activities. This in turn leads to increased poverty.

Since the end of the civil war in 1991, both the degree of poverty and size of female-headed households have increased. The end of the war led to the dismantling of the huge military apparatus built by the previous Government and the demobilization of large numbers of soldiers, many of whom are disabled. Thus the war left a significantly large number of widowed, divorced or abandoned women in charge of households with no means of support. 36/ Numerous children were orphaned or abandoned, thus aggravating the level of poverty. The large numbers of street children, both female and male, are visible indices of widespread poverty.

Women have been the primary victims of natural and man-made disasters. Many have been forced to abandon their homes and are found in temporary shelters and in the streets. In the temporary shelters women account for more than 75 per cent of the residents. 37/ To date, rehabilitation programmes are not targeted in a gender-conscious manner. Such a policy will have as its goal increasing women's income through the provision of employable skills. More generally, development projects have rarely made efforts to relieve women of their arduous, menial and monotonous daily tasks. Such projects could take the form of providing women with potable water, improved fuelwood supplies, alternative stoves and cooking techniques, grain mills, basic consumer goods, easily accessible and modest health-care centres and affordable transport. 38/ Neglect of women's critical needs has aggravated the levels of poverty and results in intergenerational transmission of poverty.

VIII. INEQUALITY IN WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE DEFINITION OF ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND POLICIES AND THE PRODUCTIVE PROCESS ITSELF

As has been indicated above, agriculture is clearly the most important means of livelihood for most Ethiopians. Out of the agrarian population, rural and nomadic women account for 49.7 per cent. However women's access to land is highly limited. The land reform of 1975 nationalized all rural land and mandated the direct distribution of land mostly on the basis of household size. According to the reform, land was allocated to the head of the household. In practice this has meant that, in most instances, land was registered in the name

of male household heads. In a few places where women had access to land, they often received smaller size plots and poor quality land.

In accordance with the spirit of the land reform, in quite a number of places female-headed households have been beneficiaries of land allocation. As a result of the long civil war, internal and external displacement of the population, recurrent famines and the policy of forced resettlement, the number of female-headed households has increased. It is estimated that the number of female-headed households in the rural areas ranges between 20 to 25 per cent. Given that the sexual division of labour bars women from sowing and planting, women have to depend on male labour or rented tractor power. These forms of dependencies impose a number of difficulties on female-headed households. Their land is not ploughed, seeded or harvested on time. Furthermore they have to forfeit no less than 50 per cent of the yield as payment for services rendered. This form of payment further reduces their meagre income.

Most women who have plots or who work as family labour have no access to agriculture extension programmes. Extension services are highly gender-biased. While men receive training, advice and support related to farming activities, women are exposed only to training focused on child-rearing and home gardening.

In rural areas, credit was available through membership in rural institutions such as service cooperatives and producer cooperatives. As only heads of households were registered for membership in these institutions, most women were denied access to credit. However, most female-headed households were registered as members. In general, women have had limited access to productive resources such as land, seeds, fertilizers, improved farm implements and credit. In some areas where the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and NGOs had pilot credit projects for women on a grant basis, the repayment rates by women were very high. In urban areas access to credit is premised on the availability of collateral. Hence only those women with adequate financial assets are able to qualify for credit.

IX. INEQUALITY IN ACCESS TO EDUCATION, HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT AND OTHER MEANS TO MAXIMIZE AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND USE OF WOMEN'S CAPACITIES

A. Education of women

In Ethiopia, the overall illiteracy rate is extremely high. In 1970, about 83 per cent of the total population was illiterate. The Government launched the national literacy campaign throughout the 1980s. By 1990, the illiteracy rate for the country as a whole was approximately 61 per cent and 74 per cent for women. It is estimated that about 8 million women have participated in the campaign between 1979 and 1990. Out of the total number of those who registered initially, 52 per cent were women. Similarly women had a higher success rate in that they made up 51 per cent of those who passed their exam. Unfortunately, it is reported that most of the newly literate women have tended to relapse into illiteracy owing to the lack of post-literacy courses and/or their inability to attend courses because of their heavy workloads.

In rural areas, women's access to skills training centres are highly limited. The major obstacle is perhaps the lack of dormitory facilities for women in most of the skills training centres. The preparation of gender-conscious reading materials and the creation of an overall enabling environment are needed to facilitate women's participation in adult education and skills training programmes.

In Ethiopia, school enrolment is very low, with only 37 per cent of the eligible age groups in school at the primary level. The enrolment level of girls is even lower. Since 1980, the previous Government engaged in constant rhetoric about the special efforts to be made to rectify women's discrimination in education and training. However, until recently, no concrete steps were taken to ensure gender parity in education. As can be observed from tables 8, 9 and 10, the enrolment of girls still lags behind that of boys from primary to university level. In schools, girls are offered an inferior curriculum and are subject to bias in selection procedures as well as discrimination on the part of teachers. Girls continue to be offered more of the home-oriented rather than the employment-oriented subjects.

Many studies have noted that cultural values regarding the education of women are influenced by a society's views of gender roles. In most of these cultures the patriarchal system is dominant, the division of labour by sex appears rigid and often limits the female to that of a wife, mother and housekeeper and promotes ideas and norms reinforcing these roles.

The pattern of student enrolment and participation from the primary grade to the senior secondary schools indicates that the number of girls enrolled remains lower than that of boys. However, as can be seen from table 8, recent data indicate a reduction in the gap. This might perhaps be because the enrolment of males has tended to remain the same since 1986. The number of girls who continue to drop out of school or to repeat classes is higher than that of boys. The available data do not breakdown access to education by location and socio-economic group. The gender gap in school enrolment is much wider in rural areas and in extremely poor areas of urban centres.

In addition to the disappointing enrolment rates for girls at the primary level, there is a gender gap in the transition rates (see tables 9.A and 9.B). The percentage of girls who make the transition between primary and secondary education is still very low. This is a clear indication that female students are not good survivors at these two levels. This contributes to the decreasing number of female students at higher levels of education in Ethiopia.

Similarly, an examination of the undergraduate intake for degree programmes indicates that girls only account for 10.9 per cent. Their distribution in the various fields of specialization too clusters around social sciences, agriculture (home science), the natural sciences, veterinary sciences and medicine, in that order. It should be clearly indicated that, even though it may be somewhat encouraging that female students have started to join some male-dominated fields, they are still the minority (see table 10).

The current male-female ratio in science and technology in Ethiopia is most probably the result of gender bias in the provision of educational services.

The prevalence of sex-differentiated programmes and curricula within schools, which tends to reserve certain activities only for men, redirects girls away from a focus on science subjects. Special efforts should be made to change social behaviour, starting at elementary schools, to encourage women to study general science and technical subjects and to promote positive attitudes in women's professional and skills development. 39/

From those females who got the chance to go to schools, quite a considerable number of them repeat once or more at every grade level. The higher dropout rate is also another problem. Almost all the studies carried out regarding the academic performance of females indicate that males perform better than girls in all subjects at every grade level. Some have revealed that in the curricula and the educational materials, topics, languages, activities, characters, occupations and examples in the texts as well as pictorial content are generally male-biased. The problem is most serious in science subjects. In general the curriculum fails to nurture and encourage girls.

On the other hand, the majority of Ethiopian women did not get the opportunity to receive formal education. Non-formal education is the main mechanism to reach these women, who are responsible for very exhausting and time-consuming tasks in the home as well as in agriculture. The literacy campaigns and other adult education activities in the non-formal education sector provided women with the opportunity to orient themselves with some reading and writing skills. However, for lack of follow-up, continuity and other factors, many women became illiterate again and unable to apply the skills they had acquired.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education has adopted an educational policy that addresses a wide range of problems of education in Ethiopia in general and gender biases in particular. The stated objectives to the educational policy include the following as regards gender:

(a) Improvement of the social attitudes towards women's roles and contributions;

(b) The context of education should be democratic and particularly designed to ensure female participation, to eliminate the gender gap in education and eliminate sex role stereotypes from textbooks;

(c) The State will give financial support to increase female participation.

The educational policy has already begun to be implemented.

Attempts to reduce the gender gap include affirmative action at the level of university admissions where the Ethiopian school-leaving certificate entrance score required of females for entrance into a regular degree programme was 3.0 while the corresponding requirement for males was 3.2. In 1994, 331 female students were admitted to the university through this scheme. Similarly, 20 per cent of those accepted in the teacher training institute have been female. For the remaining 80 per cent, women could compete with men. But in cases where males and females had equal points, preference was given to females.

B. Access to health

Among other things, nutrition, environment, availability of health services, culture and attitudes, education, standard of living and income are decisive for health. The health status of Ethiopians is extremely low as evidenced by all the indicators. The most significant health status indicator, the infant mortality rate, stands at 107.7 per 1,000 children. The under 5 mortality rate is 161 per 1,000 children. Life expectancy at birth stands at only 53.5 years. Maternal mortality rate is 700 per 100,000.

Access to piped water is limited to 83 per cent of the urban population and only 11 per cent of the rural population. Overall health service coverage is below 46 per cent and the prevalence and incidence of diseases appears to be on the increase. Communicable diseases and malnutrition account for the highest morbidity and mortality. Currently the bleak health profile is exacerbated by the rapid spread of the AIDS pandemic.

The health-care system consists of traditional health care, public health care, private non-profit voluntary and private health care. The traditional health-care system caters for more than half the population and consists of herbalists, bone-setters, religious healers and traditional birth attendants. Furthermore even people who use the modern health system resort to traditional medicine as a complementary option.

The public health system consists of community health agents, health stations, health centres, hospitals and regional referral hospitals. As the previous regime considered health a low priority, for most of the 1980s approximately 3.6 per cent of the national budget was allocated to health. By the early 1990s, the system of community health collapsed. Given the prohibitive increase in the price of imported drugs, most health stations, health centres and hospitals, especially in rural areas, operate with highly limited facilities and a handful of imported drugs.

Deteriorating health services in the public sector have led to the proliferation of private clinics. While some of the clinics are staffed by highly qualified doctors and health personnel, most are run by unqualified persons in all major towns and villages. In addition, unemployed youth and ex-soldiers have taken up illegal medical practices to earn a living. These people provide illegal vaccinations and sell drugs without a doctor's prescription. Such practices by unqualified persons have increased the risks of infections. Of this, the most serious is the use of unsterilized equipment, which increases the risk of HIV/AIDS.

The above facts have many implications for the women of Ethiopia, most of whom are poor and suffer from low social status, are frequently pregnant, have to care for many children and are deprived of education and employment. Poverty is perhaps the most serious contributing factor to ill health in Ethiopia. Poverty, and particularly women's poverty, often results in malnutrition. Women and children are susceptible to malnutrition and are therefore a specific high-risk group in relation to health. Women's and children's health is also seriously affected by unsafe water and poor sanitation.

Lack of easy access to water and inadequate sanitation has numerous implications for women. In almost all parts of Ethiopia, women are responsible for the arduous task of fetching water, often from long distances. This responsibility endangers their health through its high demand on energy among women who are already nutritionally vulnerable, especially during pregnancy. Furthermore, in fetching water and washing clothes poor women are constantly exposed to water-borne diseases.

In urban areas, the problems related to inadequate water supply and lack of sanitation are exacerbated by overcoming and poorly built shelters. Most households depend on biomass fuels such as wood, charcoal, dung and crop residues. Furthermore, most urban and rural households cook on open fires in poorly ventilated dwellings. It has been noted that the smoke from the aforementioned fuels contains numerous harmful elements likely to cause chronic lung disease and cancer of the pharynx. Experience elsewhere has shown that providing women with inexpensive stoves that are designed to use less fuel and minimize the amount of smoke can improve women's health.

As indicated above, most women in Ethiopia are still illiterate and only a limited number of girls have the opportunity to complete primary school. The gender gap in education has numerous implications for the health and nutrition of the population. There is now a global consensus that the education of women alleviates the major contributors to ill health. Education enables women to overcome poverty, generate more income, improve health and nutrition, reduce family size and increase their confidence and has a positive influence on the next generation.

The maternal morbidity and mortality rates in Ethiopia are one of the highest in the world. In the rural areas, maternal mortality is two to three times higher owing to the lack of antenatal care and emergency obstetric facilities for high-risk pregnancies. Overall, 84 per cent of women do not receive antenatal care. During pregnancy, women require a higher food intake, greater time for rest and recreation and a more supportive social and physical environment than they do when not pregnant.

In Ethiopia, each year some 17,000 women of child-bearing age die of complications associated with pregnancy and childbirth. The high maternal mortality rate is not well reflected in data from hospitals and health centres, which indicates that women are dying of easily preventable diseases. 40/ As confirmed by other studies, maternal deaths quite clearly show that women are exposed to diseases and death mostly from preventable risk factors. Of these, the direct ones are associated with factors involving the pregnancy itself, while the indirect factors are those disease conditions that become morbid and mortal when they occur simultaneously with pregnancy.

Hospital records indicate that 70 per cent of maternal deaths are directly attributable to complications of pregnancy, labour and delivery, while 30 per cent are from infections occurring during pregnancy. About 90 per cent of maternal deaths are considered preventable given adequate community knowledge and accessibility to and effectiveness of the health services delivery system. 41/

The total fertility rate in Ethiopia was about 7.5 children per woman in 1992. With the common practice of early marriage in the rural areas, the reproductive career of many Ethiopian women starts at the early age of about 12 to 14 years. Various studies have shown that, whenever fertility is high, maternal, infant and child mortality rates are also high. Specifically, the high mortality rate in Ethiopia is due to early marriage, short birth intervals, pregnancies in women under the age of 20 and above the age of 35, serious nutrition deficiencies, low birth weight, high prevalence of infectious and communicable diseases, lack of antenatal care, multiparity and lack of access to facilities and basic amenities such as potable water and sanitation (see table 13).

Another alarming health trend is that related to the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is difficult to provide accurate figures, as the pandemic is underreported. By 1992, the estimated total number of HIV infections was 400,000. Of these, 42 per cent occurred in Addis Ababa. The overall gender breakdown is 63 per cent males and 37 per cent females. Recent data indicate that the proportion of female patients being reported has increased since 1992 (see table 14). The majority of AIDS victims are between the ages of 15 and 49. The risk is higher among women who practice multi-partner survival strategies, female students and women who are married to migrant workers, i.e., truck drivers and traders.

Women are vulnerable to HIV because of their low socio-economic status, the widespread prevalence of harmful cultural practices such as early marriage, frequent pregnancies and overall low health status. The impact on women of the spread of HIV/AIDS includes increased responsibilities towards the survival needs of AIDS-afflicted households, as well as an increased burden of caring for sick relatives, neglect of children's needs and other domestic chores, loss of income and hence a dramatic decline in the standard of living.

In response to the health needs of the country, the Transitional Government of Ethiopia formulated a national health policy in 1993, which provides a foundation for the development of the health sectors in the country. The policy puts emphasis on expansion of health services to the rural areas, disease prevention and control programmes, integrated care delivery system, active involvement of the community, intersectoral collaboration and use of appropriate technology. The policy also stresses that special attention should be given to the health needs of:

(a) The family, particularly women and children;

(b) Those in the forefront of productivity;

(c) Those hitherto most neglected regions and segments of the population, including the majority of the rural population, pastoralists, the urban poor and national minorities;

(d) People in the man-made and natural disaster-affected areas.

The Ethiopian Government also promulgated a population policy in 1993, which would provide greater access to family planning facilities and, if

implemented, would enhance the economic and social status of women, thereby reducing the excessive burden of child-bearing and rearing. This in turn would contribute to the improvement of the health status of women.

C. Employment

As indicated above, the majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture for its livelihood. Access to wage employment is limited to a small portion of the population. The largest employer is the public sector. In 1983, 73 per cent of those employed in the modern sector accounted for 18.6 per cent of the urban labour force and 2.3 of the total labour force. By the early 1980s, the manufacturing industry provided the largest share of wage employment, followed by community services and agriculture. However, by 1987, community services provided the largest share of employment, followed by 21 per cent in agriculture and 17.9 per cent in manufacturing.

In all sectors of paid employment, temporary or contractual, public or private, males outnumber females. According to the 1984 census, the female participation rate in the labour force was 41.8 per cent. The participation rate was 39.2 per cent in the urban areas and 42.1 per cent in the rural areas. 42/ Other characteristics of the labour market are similar to the global trends in women's employment. Women are concentrated in low-skilled and low-paid jobs with limited promotion prospects. Women in formal employment are concentrated in manufacturing and social services such as teaching, nursing, social work and secretarial services. In addition to the limited job market, which has tended to privilege males, low levels of women's employment have resulted from limited access to education and training opportunities, prevalence of sex-differentiated programmes and curricula within schools as well as cultural norms and expectations. The cumulative effect of all these factors is women's low self-esteem and their concentration in "female jobs".

Although women are estimated to account for no less than 55.5 per cent of the urban population, only 23 per cent were employed in both the public and the private sectors. Employment data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs indicate that, out of the total number of women employed in the formal sector, two thirds are in manufacturing (mostly textiles) and social services (predominantly clerical). For example, in the electricity and gas services, women employees constitute 64.4 per cent, while in the insurance and trade services, they constitute 58.2 per cent of the employees. 43/ Overall, women earn extremely low wages. The percentage of women in administrative and managerial positions in the public and private sector is only 0.9 per cent and 4.2 per cent respectively. Table 2 gives an indication of jobs that women have been applying for in the last decade. Most are classified among those who seek clerical posts and as unskilled job seekers.

Non-salaried employment

A strikingly visible economic reality of the recent past is women's growing participation in the informal sector. As most households in Ethiopia are faced with declining income, there are only a very small percentage of households that can be characterized as single-earner households. However, even though women's

contribution to household income has become crucial, the ideology of the male breadwinner still prevails. The majority of the population does not expect women to be owners of property, become bread-earners for the family or assume a leadership role in society. The fact that there are a number of women who have succeeded in assuming their rightful place in society with equal status should be considered the exception rather than the rule.

The most common type of work in the urban area is self-employment, in which the majority of urban women are engaged. Lacking adequate education or marketable skills, most women depend on micro-enterprises, domestic services or prostitution. One of the most visible ways that women earn their livelihood in urban centres is by supplying the city with firewood that they gather and transport on their backs. They are also frequently engaged in retail trades - ranging from spices to grains, cereals and vegetables, selling "tella" (local beer) and cooked food items.

As women have no access to credit, they often have to depend on an informal rotating credit association for start-up capital. Some women may also depend on financial, material and labour assistance from their families. There is a great need for small-scale credit and other entrepreneurial services and managerial training for women. To improve the employment situation of Ethiopian women, the government national machineries and NGOs have to make organized and coordinated efforts to mobilize women through women's groups in rural and urban centres as well as through implementation of existing legislative and administrative structures.

Similarly, the implementation of health, education, social and economic policies that have explicitly tried to address the injustices that women in Ethiopia have suffered for long are likely to alleviate the problems related to women's employment. Women's employment is also likely to benefit from a gender-conscious focus on vocational training. As can be observed from table 3, the pattern of women's training in vocational schools indicates a tendency to focus on traditional female fields of specialization. A deliberate effort to reorient women's vocational training to more employable and rewarding skills will improve women's employment and create new role models for young women.

X. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Until very recently, violence against women has not been discussed publicly. The structural causes of violence against women are to be found in the low status of women in the economic, political, cultural and legal systems. More specifically, violence against women reflects the power relations between men and women in society. In most parts of Ethiopia, the husband's right to "discipline" his wife is accepted and only the rape of a virgin is likely to attract public sanction.

The Penal Code in Ethiopia considers rape, bodily assault, blows, wounds, maiming injuries or harm as criminal offences. However, the Penal Code itself contains many ambiguities concerning both rape and wife-battering. 44/ Moreover, most of the public, including educated women, are not aware of the provisions in the Penal Code. Most importantly, most women and their families

will not report rape and even less so wife-battering. However, recently this culture of silence seems to be undergoing some change. For example, families of rape victims appealed to the Women's Affairs Office to try and put a stop to the frequent incidence of rape of young girls. More reports are also reaching the police regarding sexual relations with children under 15 years of age as well as rape cases. A growing number of schoolgirls are reporting cases of sexual harassment by school teachers who threaten and/or actually fail girls who refuse to submit to their sexual advances.

The recognition that violence against women in the family and society is pervasive and cuts across income, class and culture should warrant urgent and effective steps to eliminate its incidence. From these limited reports it may be observed that there are several varieties of violence against women in Ethiopia.

Not much has been done in controlling these various forms of violence and raising public awareness about the extensive damage to women in terms of physical and psychological damage, emotional trauma, sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, or unwelcome pregnancies. At present, it is women who are made to feel shame. It is also necessary to sensitize the police, lawyers, social workers, teachers and political leaders. The most daunting task is that of challenging local customs and traditional practices that encourage violence against women and changing a public attitude that tolerates violence.

Ethiopia is, at the moment, going through a democratization process, formulating policies, drafting the national Constitution, organizing women, etc. If all social and economic policies are translated into practice, the Government, women's organizations and NGOs would cooperate in developing appropriate correctional and educational services to fight violence against women in Ethiopia.

XI. EFFECTS OF ONGOING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ARMED OR OTHER KINDS OF CONFLICTS ON WOMEN

Ethiopia was engaged in a war for about 30 years. The legacy of military dictatorship and civil war could be summarized as rampant death, economic decline, huge numbers of displaced persons, decline in food production, chronic food shortages, widespread absolute poverty and shattered social and physical infrastructure. The war commanded a disproportionate amount of the national budget, which resulted in the ruin of the economy and the collapse of the health and social services. These man-made disasters were exacerbated by recurrent drought, poor rains and desertification. These political, economic, social and environmental problems have affected women more adversely than men. Women were imprisoned, tortured and raped as part of political repression, war and factional strife.

Women have been displaced from their communities and left to cope with deplorable conditions of abject poverty. Displacement has meant the loss of traditional mutual support systems. In the majority of cases, women were widowed, divorced or deserted, suddenly becoming the sole contributors to household income and family care. Displacement imposed a deplorable burden on

women who had to cope with a radically different environment. Family break-ups, high child mortality and general privation were most distressing to women.

In the north, women joined the liberation army and helped to redefine the traditional role of women. In the rest of the country and in spite of great adversity, women's resilience helped them to devise a number of survival strategies to mitigate the economic and social stress. A major response by women has been migration to towns, where most of those with children eke out a living from petty trading. Others are hired in domestic service or become prostitutes. In the majority of cases, these women, who are female heads of household, belong to the chronically poor segments of the population.

The end of the war has generated new forms of social problems. It heralded the demobilization of one of the largest armies in Africa, which has created significant hardships. Very few options are available for the soldiers handicapped by war injuries. Soldiers who were reported or presumed dead returned home to find the former family ties dissolved. After spending years on the warfronts, many soldiers lost their desire to return to their farmlands; others found their farmlands distributed to other farmers or for other purposes. This has resulted in a considerable number of men who have lost their means of livelihood (see annex I).

The end of the war has been followed by new forms of displacement. One of the first policy measures taken by the Provisional Government of Eritrea was the repatriation of large numbers of Ethiopians residing in different parts of the country. The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission estimates the total number of people displaced from Eritrea as 200,000 persons or approximately 40,000 households. In the capital city, the total number of displaced persons from Eritrea is reported to be 10,724 households, of whom about 70 per cent are headed by women. Most of these people are in temporary shelters and depend on relief for their survival.

The policy of decentralization and regional autonomy adopted by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia has also triggered displacements resulting from ethnic conflicts. By 1992, it was estimated that 81,935 persons were displaced as a result of ethnic conflicts. This wave of displacement has also resulted in the abandonment of wives and children as well as divorce and damage to property. 45/

The Transitional Government of Ethiopia has set in motion a process of democratization, marking a shift away from a centralized system of administration to regionalization and local autonomy to restore peace in the country. The Government also encourages the women of Ethiopia to organize and participate in the peace process at the decision-making level and in formulating policies that would affect women's lives.

The Ethiopian Government is playing an exemplary role in resolving the long-standing conflicts and ending the longest war that has affected millions of citizens in general and Ethiopian women in particular.

Notes

1/ Central Statistical Authority, 1990.

2/ UNICEF, Situation analysis, 1991.

3/ UNICEF, 1993.

4/ Ibid.

5/ SIDA, Country gender analysis, 1993.

6/ Alasebu, 1987.

7/ Ibid.

8/ Hirut, 1979.

9/ National policy on women in Ethiopia, 1993.

10/ UNICEF, Situation analysis, 1993.

11/ Ibid.

12/ Ibid.

13/ Economic Commission for Africa, Rural Progress, Nos. 1 and 2, 1984.

14/ Women's Affairs Office, National programme of action, 1992.

15/ National policy on women, 1993.

16/ Ibid.

17/ National programme of action, 1992.

18/ National programme of action, 1992.

19/ Ibid.

20/ Ibid.

21/ Ibid.

22/ Profile of Ethiopian Women, 1993.

23/ Ibid.

24/ Ibid.

25/ National policy on women, 1993.

26/ Profile of Ethiopian Women, 1993.

27/ Ibid.

28/ SIDA, Country gender analysis, 1993.

29/ Hillina Taddesse Tamrat, 1994.

30/ Ibid.

31/ Profile of Ethiopian Women's Affairs Office, 1993.

32/ WAO report, 1993.

33/ Election Commission Bulletin Nos. 2, 7 and 8, 1992.

34/ SIDA, Gender analysis, 1993.

35/ World Bank, 1989.

36/ UNICEF, Children and Women in Ethiopia, Situation report, 1993.

37/ Ibid.

38/ WAO, Preamble to the national policy on women, 1993.

39/ Atsede Wondimagnehu, 1991.

40/ UNICEF, Situation analysis, 1993.

41/ Ibid.

42/ MOLSA, Situation analysis on employment and livelihood, 1994 (draft).

43/ Ibid.

44/ Helena, 1994.

45/ SIDA, Gender analysis, 1993.

Annex I

BUT CAN WOMEN WIN THE PEACE?*

So what is the situation now and what is the prognosis for the future? Women have always been exploited in time of war and then sent back to the kitchen. Why should Ethiopia be any different?

For now, all I can do is to look at some negative and positive signs. We'll start with the negative. The restoration of Ethiopian law means that law in the dissident provinces is now in the hands of conventionally trained law professionals once more. There is no place for illiterate women judges, however wise, in the new Ethiopia. Similarly, unconventionally trained women (and men) in a whole range of vital skills for the revolutionary period have been replaced by the old educational elites. It will take a long time to turn this situation around. Women everywhere in Ethiopia are disadvantaged by their lack of education and by a culture, especially in the rural area, that denies its relevance to them; at least in the north, more women are more likely to see its relevance in the future. Perhaps the most important question is whether women's issues will be driven off the agenda by urgent economic difficulties and by the priorities of post-war reconstruction.

However, there are some positive signs. In September 1991, less than three months after the end of the war, I attended the founding conference of the Democratic Association of Women in Tigray, an amalgamation of the old women's and women fighters' associations, founded explicitly to safeguard the continuation of women's struggle for a better life. Elected delegates came from all over Tigray, having already discussed in their own local associations suggestions on a range of issues in draft. After furious discussion and sometimes argument (the right to abortion was one hotly debated issue) the final resolutions once again gave priority to the overriding needs of women for alleviation of their routine work, including powered grinding facilities and access to clean water and fuel. The downside is that the elected full-time workers for the Association cannot even afford the resources to run a tiny office. They are typing to raise money for desks, chairs and typewriters. This Association is vital if women are going to remain organized to claim their rights. Another positive sign is that the local democratic Baito assembly remains the grass-roots decision-making body, so that the laws on marriage and women's rights to land and equal power and participation with men remain intact. Under the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, development has been decentralized to the regions and this is likely to increase the resources for those fundamental needs which women have said so often are their priority. The Relief Society of Tigray (REST) has opened a women's desk and declared a programme of priorities; a national policy on Ethiopian women was officially launched by the Women's Affairs Office in Addis Ababa last September. But I know nothing more at the moment. In the transitional period, until national elections bring in Ethiopia's first democratically elected Government, the EPRDF

---

* Extract from Jenny Hammond, "Women and the Liberation Struggle in Northern Ethiopia".

army has retained responsibility for internal law and order, but, although no women fighters have been demobilized yet, I've been informed that 40,000 have been already redirected into retraining schemes.

Finally, in May 1993, Aregash Adane presented the paper to the symposium on the new Ethiopian Constitution from which I have already quoted.

> "In our view the Constitution cannot be democratic unless it addresses the issues of women, who comprise half of any society. In the context of Ethiopia, one should not forget that this moment was made possible in part as the result of the selfless struggle and sacrifice of ordinary poor women. We, the women of EPRDF, would like to share with you our views, our experience and our achievements, because we believe that what we have learned can and should have an impact on the development of our new Constitution."

For the first time women's issues are likely to be included in the new Constitution, the all-party suggestions for which are being circulated for discussion throughout Ethiopia at the moment (January/February 1994).

Annex II

TABLES

1. Total population by sex and broad age group

Age group	Sex	Population (in 000's) 1987 Number	1987 %	1990 Number	1990 %
0-14	M	11 696.0	49.5	12 761.3	49.8
	F	10 795.7	46.5	11 783.2	46.5
	T	22 491.7	48.2	24 544.6	48.2
15-64	M	10 615.6	45.2	11 582.5	45.2
	F	11 422.5	49.2	12 475.6	49.2
	T	22 038	47.1	24 057.1	47.1
65+	M	1 174.3	5.0	1 281.3	5.0
	F	998.3	4.3	1 090.0	4.3
	T	2 172.6	4.7	2 371.3	4.7
Total	M	23 485.9	100.0	25 625.1	100.0
	F	23 216.5	100.0	25 348.8	100.0
	T	46 702.4	100.0	50 975.9	100.0

Source: Central Statistical Authority, Facts and Figures, 1990.

2. Registered job seekers by occupational preference and sex

Occupation	Male	% of total	Female	% of total	Total	% of total	Female
Professional and technical	426	1.0	407	1.0	833	1.0	48.9
Administration and managerial	49	1.0	1	0.0	50	0.0	2.0
Clerical	11 337	26.2	8 890	20.7	20 227	23.5	44.0
Sales	67	0.2	3	0.0	70	0.0	4.3
Services	271	0.6	1 812	4.2	2 083	2.4	87.0
Farm	436	1.0	33	0.1	459	0.5	7.2
Industrial							
1. Skilled	6 250	14.5	243	0.6	6 495	7.5	3.7
2. Unskilled	20 198	46.8	28 245	65.9	48 443	56.2	58.3
3. Specified	4 167	9.6	3 234	7.5	7 401	8.9	43.7

Source: Labour Statistics Bulletin, 1980 (as presented by ILO, 1986).

3. Number of trainees in vocational institutions in 1980

	Male		Female		
Field of training	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Total
Administration and management	847	97.3	23	2.7	870
Agriculture	3 455	84.8	619	15.2	4 074
Education	4 079	80.6	979	19.4	5 058
Medicine and public health	1 708	75.6	552	24.4	2 260
Industrial/technical	5 195	87.9	714	12.1	5 909
Commercial	4 188	37.5	2 476	52.5	3 964
Social services	32	82.1	7	17.9	39
Other training courses	288	75.4	94	24.6	382
Comprehensive schools	11 661	54.6	9 691	45.4	21 352

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Training of manpower in Ethiopia during 1979-1980.

4. Time-frame calendar of operation

Women's Affairs Office

1994

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Coordinate multisectoral and regional WID structure development	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Support the establishment of WID within government ministries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Assist and support WID bureaux establishment in the regions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Find ways and means to equip, develop manpower and solve the budget allocation situation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organize and make functional experimental workshops									X	X	X	X
Plan for two research activities								X	X	X	X	X
Plan and prepare to begin film-making on the situation of Ethiopian women											X	X
Organize and coordinate training of WID staff (20) at EMI			X									
Coordinate the work of Awassa Home Economics Department upgrading		X	X	X	X							
Prepare sensitization programme for media decision-makers and regional officials in gender-responsive seminars	X	X	X	X	X							
Assist in programme planning and other logistic work of the launching process of sectoral and regional WID offices	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Organize study tours and actual tours for WID central and sectoral office personnel							X	X	X	X	X	X
Organize short-term training for six people, all from WAO and WID offices			X	X	X							

/...

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Organize long-term training for three B.A.s and two M.A.s, all from WID units							X	X	X	X	X	X
Offer and support technically, financially and otherwise to assist in the implementation of the national policy of Ethiopian women	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Coordinate networking and assist sectoral and regional WID offices to function effectively	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support and follow up women's organizations and women's professional associations, their progress and in the area of assistance needed	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Encourage individuals, organizations or groups and institutions to prepare gender-responsive materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Support WID offices with technical assistance, logistics and material base	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Follow up how the implementation of the national policy of Ethiopian women is changing the situation of rural women	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What changes have been taken in terms of land tenure?						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What changes in terms of agricultural inputs?						X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What changes in terms of credit?	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
What changes in terms of training?	X	X	X	X						X	X	X
Network with national, international and regional women's programmes												
Interact with WID offices of the United Nations etc.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prepare for the World Conference in Beijing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Follow up women's participation in contributing ideas for constitution preparation to cover women's issues	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Monitor women's participation in election	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

5. Gender participation by region

Region	Number of weredas	Male voters	Female voters	Total	Women as a percentage of total
1 n.a					
3	59	753 281	476 193	1 229 474	39
4	93	837 991	322 833	1 160 874	28
7	13	202 947	105 809	308 756	34
8	8	245 064	64 367	310 431	21
9	17	195 972	95 767	291 739	33
10	6	33 671	11 559	45 230	26
11	19	117 098	53 587	170 685	46
14	28	164 736	168 080	327 816	50

Source: Election Commission Bulletin, Nos. 7 and 8, 1992.

6. Existing and new programmes for the advancement of women by lead and complementing agencies

Prog. code No.	Programme	Lead agency	Complementing agency	Status
1.	Promoting peace efforts and formation and implementation of policies and strategies to prepare the socio-political foundation for economic development	Council of Representatives	All ministries, international organizations, NGOs	Ongoing
2.	Strengthening interministerial relations on gender issues	WAO in PM's Office	All ministries	Only formative stage
3.	Formation of policy, plan and implementation	WAO	All ministries	Only formative stage
4.	Monitoring and evaluating programmes/projects targeting women	WAO MOPED	All ministries, NGOs	Ongoing and in formative stage
5.	Organizing and directing WAO units in State institutions	WAO	International organizations, all ministries	Only formative stage
6.	Conducting workshops on the role and status of women in development Nutrition promotion	WAO, Government	International organizations, MOPED	Ongoing
7.	Training of personnel	MOPED	MOI, WAO, women's associations, local NGOs, multi- and bilateral organizations, ENI	Partially ongoing
8.	National literacy programme to reach the remaining hard-to-reach adults and to strengthen the post-literacy programme	MOE	WAO, women's associations, NGOs multi- and bilateral organizations	Ongoing
9.	Improving and expanding educational programmes/projects	MOE	WAO, women's associations, NGOs multi- and bilateral and international organizations	Ongoing
10.	Relief and settlement assistance to displaced women, with special attention to those heading households	WAO RRC	Ministry of Home Affairs, MOPED, MOLSA, NGOs, UNICEF, UNHCR, other United Nations systems	Partially ongoing
11.	Commissioning and coordinating research into the problems of equality and development of women	WAO	All concerned agencies	Proposed
12.	Legal reform	WAO	MOJ, MOLSA, cooperating international organizations	Proposed
13.	Gender awareness training for government employees	WAO	All ministries	Proposed
14.	Public information and education	WAO	Women's associations MOW, MOI, MOLSA, MOAEP, MOCS	Proposed

Prog. code No.	Programme	Lead agency	Complementing agency	Status
15.	Workshop on culture and traditions	WAO	All ministries, NGOs, religious organizations, concerned international organizations	Proposed
16.	Identifying economic programmes that would address income problems of females	WAO	Ministry of Industry, MOAEPD, MOLSA, MOCH, MOPED, NGOs, United Nations system	Proposed
17.	Child-care facilities for working women	WAO	MOLSA	Proposed
18.	Provisions of credit and marketing services	WAO	MOF, MOAEPD, United Nations system, Ministry of Foreign and Domestic Trade, Ministry for Int. Economic Assistance	Proposed
19.	Formation of policy for women in development	WAO	All ministries, NGOs, women's associations	Proposed

Source: MPA, 1992.

7. Additional resources planned for the period 1993/2002 by type of expenditure (US$ '000)

(Estimates)

PROGRAMME AND INPUTS	RECURRENT EXPENDITURE			CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		
	1993	1994	1995/2002	1993	1994	1994/2002
1. Research						
1.1 Health						
- 2 Consultants	20.0					
- 1 Consultant	10.0					
1.2 Education	10.0					
- 1 Consultant	80.0					
- Training of trainers and women entrepreneurs	100.0	100.0	300.0			
- Support to curriculum and programme development focusing on women	60.0	80.0				
1.3 Agriculture, environment protection and development in regions - 6 consultants	45.0 75.0					
1.4 Identifying and promoting income generating non-agricultural activities for women	360.0 10.0	380.0				
- 3 consultants in formal sector	10.0					
- 3 informal sector consultants	5.0	10.0	150.0			
- Supporting credit provision targeting disadvantaged female entrepreneurs						
1.5 Legal reform						
- Consultant						350.0
1.6 Methods measuring women's contribution to output						
1.7 How best can be organized child-care facilities for working women (in 3 industrial centres)						

PROGRAMME AND INPUTS	RECURRENT EXPENDITURE			CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		
	1993	1994	1995/2002	1993	1994	1994/2002
1.8 Research into developing and technology that enable women to have time for more paying employment						
2. Drafting policy for women in development	30.0					
- 3 consultants						
3. Strengthening WAO	85.0	48.0	50.0			
4. Strengthening WID Unit in MOPED	47.9	51.1	63.3			
- Research	20.0	30.0	10.0	36.6	30.0	
5. Training and visits and tours	31.3	34.6	40.0			
6. Workshop	9.7	10.0	11.0			
7. Establishing and strengthening WID units in offices for local government	425.1	852.8	938.1	243.8	245.1	

8. Student enrolment by level and sex

	LEVEL					
	Primary		Junior secondary		Senior secondary	
Year	Total	Girls %	Total	Girls %	Total	Girls %
1980/81	1 798 721	33.9	186 813	34.1	211 672	35.4
1985/86	2 178 266	38.4	329 381	37.9	285 924	38.7
1986/87	2 449 047	37.8	385 135	38.2	311 077	38.4
1988/89	2 549 040	38.2	401 584	40.0	418 127	39.2
1990/91	2 157 352	39.0	349 179	43.6	445 578	41.6
1991/92	1 782 158	41.1	305 669	45.7	408 353	44.4
1992/93	1 638 897	40.1	292 849	46.6	358 072	45.3

Source: Basic Statistics, Ministry of Education, 1994.

9A. Grade 6 candidates by sex and passing 1985/86-1987/88

	Sex			Passed		
Year	Total	Female	% female	Total	Female	% female
1986	273 178	124 019	44.6	228 600	87 323	38.2
1987	289 367	118 684	41.8	227 382	91 231	38.4
1988	231 734	118 022	41.9	219 850	82 835	37.8

9B. Grade 8 candidates by sex and passing 1985/86-1987/88

	Sex			Passed		
Year	Total	Female	% female	Total	Female	% female
1986	174 876	74 100	42.4	117 786	44 592	37.8
1987	214 568	80 440	42.1	140 580	84 328	37.2
1988	337 011	104 886	42.1	183 135	59 366	32.9

Source: Ministry of Education, 1989 (as presented by Seyoum Teferra, November 1991).

10. Placement of female students in freshman programme during the 1988/89 academic year

Degree programme			
Field of specialization	Total	Female no.	Female %
Social sciences	726	128	17.8
Agriculture (Home science)	470	55	11.5
Natural sciences	1 028	83	8.1
Veterinary science	42	3	7.0
Medicine	180	12	6.6
Water technology	101	4	4.0
Education	109	8	3.7

Source: Higher Education Main Department, 1989 (as presented by Seyoum Teferra, November 1991).

11. Students enrolled in institutions of higher education in Ethiopia in regular programmes by year, level and sex

	Education							
	Diploma			Undergraduate			Post-graduate	
Academic year	M/F	F	%F	M/F	F	%F	M/F	F
1981/82	5 315	957	18.0	9 416	1 037	11.0	254	---
1982/83	5 605	935	16.7	10 281	1 069	10.40	231	15
1983/84	5 473	836	15.3	10 303	908	8.81	223	9
1984/85	5 821	955	16.4	10 994	990	9.00	274	15
1985/86	6 170	961	15.6	12 008	1 016	8.46	279	21
1986/87	6 071	766	12.6	11 530	934	8.10	324	29
1987/88	6 254	891	14.2	10 839	913	8.42	431	26
1988/89	6 657	965	14.5	10 547	873	8.28	503	31
1989/90	6 713	1 004	15.0	10 327	845	8.18	573	37
1990/91	6 837	1 082	15.8	10 401	820	7.88	549	51

Source: Office of Statistics and Educational Information (HEMO) (as presented by SIDA, 1993).

12. Teachers by sex and level

1980-1993

Year	Primary total	% Female	Junior total	Secondary % female	Junior total	Secondary % female
1980/81	27 628	22.2	4 101	8.8	4 850	10.2
1985/86	45 860	25.4	6 567	9.9	7 574	11.3
1989/90	58 873	23.1	9 111	10.5	10 845	8.8
1990/91	61 448	23.3	9 611	10.5	11 421	8.6
1992/93	65 091	25.0	9 632	10.0	10 897	8.7

Source: Ministry of Education, 1994.

13. Crude death rates, infant mortality rates and life expectancy at birth

	CDR			IMR			Life expectancy at birth		
Year	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
1970	20.0	16.9	20.0	155	134	153	43.8	45.0	43.9
1981	18.1	15.7	17.9	141	117	139	46.5	50.8	46.9
1984	---	---	---	112	94	110	51.7	55.5	52.0
1991	---	---	18.0	---	---	111	---	---	47.0

Source: Data for 1970 and 1981 are from CSA and data for 1984 are from OPHCC (as presented by SIDA, 1993).

14. AIDS cases by year of report

Year	Number			Sex ratio
	Male	Female	Total	M:F
1986	1	1	2	1:1
1987	12	5	17	2.4:1
1988	67	18	85	3.7:1
1989	128	62	190	2.1:1
1990	292	156	448	1.8:1
1991	588	301	889	1.9:1
1992	1 978	1 252	3 230	1.6:1
1993	367	258	625	1.4:1
Total	3 433	1 053	5 486	1.7:1

Source: Ministry of Health, National AIDS Control Programme, AIDS cases surveillance in Ethiopia, February 1993 (as presented by UNICEF, 1993).

15. Number of workers in the reporting establishment classified by holding, sex and type of employment

	Sex	Permanent employee	Temporary employee	Contract workers	Total number	%
Public						
Government	M	205 837	50 701	6 484	263 022	72.7
	F	50 820	7 011	795	58 626	16.2
Semi government	M	15 641	1 548	710	17 899	4.9
	F	1 389	100	98	1 587	0.4
Private	M	10 059	2 854	3 376	16 289	4.5
	F	2 665	1 208	758	4 631	1.3
Total	M	231 537	55 103	10 570	297 210	82.1
	F	54 874	8 319	1 651	64 844	17.9
	T	286 411	63 422	12 221	362 054	100.0

Source: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Employment Survey in Ethiopia, 1981.

16. Distribution of female employment by industry

Industry	Public sector						Private sector					
	1970			1981			1970			1981		
	Total No. employed	% female	Rank	Total No. employed	% female	Rank	Total No. employed	% female	Rank	Total No. employed	% female	
Agriculture	834	0.0	8	76 245	9.2	6	34 496	1.8	6	---	---	
Mining, etc.	2 721	0.0	7	---	---	---	782	1.0	7	194	7.2	
Manufacturing	5 964	27.7	1	66 308	24.4	3	68 768	26.3	2	3 584	25.9	
Electricity, gas, etc.	1 766	3.0	5	5 771	5.0	7	521	5.2	5	---	---	
Construction	9 942	0.9	6	20 662	4.2	8	5 114	0.4	8	7 366	2.8	
Whole sale and retail trade	2 058	13.1	2	11 458	37.0	1	22 375	13.8	4	7 607	39.0	
Transport, storage and communication	9 961	11.7	3	21 434	15.8	4	7 158	17.3	3	688	8.4	
Finance and insurance	---	---	---	8 330	25.0	2	---	---	---	---	---	
Social services	59 591	9.9	4	107 716	12.6	5	35 634	46.6	1	1 231	37.0	
All industries	92 837	9.8		319 924	15.6		176 848	22.5		20 670	22.4	

Source: Employment patterns, ILO, 1986.

17. Gender-specific occupation distribution of the labour force, 1970 and 1981

Occupation	Public sector								Private sector							
	1970				1981				1970				1981			
	Total	Male	Female	% F	Total	Male	Female	% F	Total	Male	Female	% F	Total	Male	Female	% F
1. Professional and technical	21 668	18 817	2 851	13.2	41 582	40 623	959	2.3	3 849	2 971	878	22.8	702	517	185	26.4
2. Admin. and managerial	3 740	3 708	32	0.9	4 146	4 030	116	2.8	3 227	3 091	136	4.2	215	207	8	3.7
3. Clerical	22 997	2 052	2 445	10.6	63 967	49 684	14 283	22.3	8 574	6 561	2 013	23.5	2 478	2 064	414	16.7
4. Sales	66	60	6	9.1	3 084	2 740	44	11.2	12 287	11 551	736	6.0	450	327	123	27.3
5. Services	12 127	10 692	1 435	11.8	39 548	30 896	8 652	21 9	17 196	20 788	16 408	44.1	2 244	1 744	500	22.3
6. Farm	2 830	2 828	2	0.1	45 843	42 804	3 039	6.6	39 573	38 780	793	2.0	20	18	2	10.0
7. Industrial workers	29 409	27 061	2 348	8.0	121 754	99 124	22 630	18 6	72 112	53 368	18 744	26.0	14 561	11 165	3 396	23.3
Total	92 837	83 718	9 119	9 8	319 924	269 901	50 023	15 6	176 818	137 110	39 708	22 5	20 670	16 042	4 628	22.4

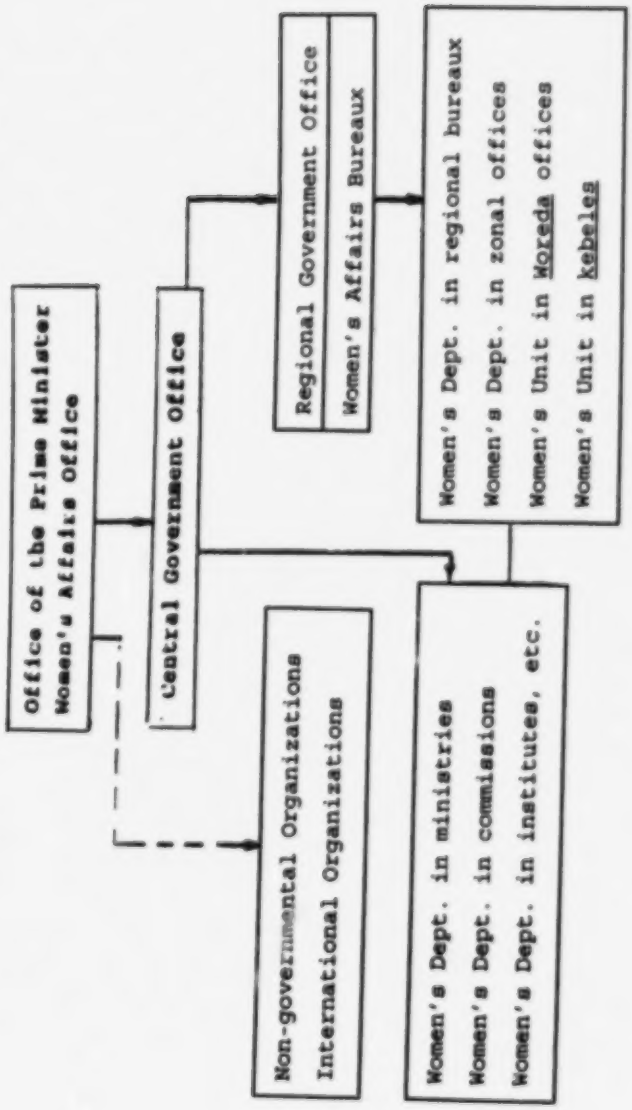
Source: Gross comparisons in the performance of the public and private sectors in 1971 and 1981 (as presented by ILO, 1986).

18. Registered job seekers by education and sex

Educational attainment	Male	% of total	Female	% of total	Total	% of total	% of total
Illiterate	11 565	33.7	23 787	55.5	38 352	44.6	62.0
Primary	11 123	25.8	6 584	15.4	17 707	20.6	37.2
Secondary							
- Junior	3 175	7.4	2 541	5.9	5 698	6.6	44.6
- Senior	8 258	19.1	5 550	12.9	13 808	16.0	40.2
Technical	1 052	2.4	892	2.1	1 944	2.3	45.9
College							
- Complete	865	2.0	278	0.7	1 143	1.3	24.3
- Incomplete	5	0.0	3	0.0	8	0.0	37.5
Not specified	4 166	9.6	3 233	7.5	7 399	8.6	43.7

Source: Labour Statistics Bulletin 1980 (as presented by ILO, 1986).

Figure 1. RELATIONSHIP OF THE OFFICE OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS AND WOMEN'S DEPARTMENTS IN THE VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS



Annex III

REFERENCES

Adanech Kidane Mariam and Azeb Tamirat (1991), Gender Influence on Women's Health, A Review of the Ethiopian Situation, Gender issues in Ethiopia, IES. Ethiopia.

Alasebu Gebre Selassie (1987), Current Machinery for the Integration of Women in Development in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.

Atsede Wondimagnehu, (1991) Women in Science and Technology in Ethiopia, Gender issues in Ethiopia, IES.

CERTWID (1993), vol. 1, No. 1.

Central Statistical Authority (1990), Facts and Figures.

Daniel Haile (1980), Law and the Status of Women in Ethiopia.

Fellows, R. A. (1993), Country gender analysis, Ethiopia, SIDA.

Gennet Zewdie (1991), Women in Primary and Secondary Education, Gender issues in Ethiopia, IES.

Guenet G./Kiristos (1974), Attitude of the Society towards Women in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University.

Hammond Jenny (1994), Women and the Liberation Struggle in Northern Ethiopia, paper presented at a conference on Women and War, St. Anthony's College, Oxford.

Hillina Tadesse Tamrat (1994), Ethiopian Law from a Gender Perspective: A Human Rights Study, Faculty of Law, Addis Ababa University.

Hirut Terefe (1979), The Role of Women in Nation Building, Senior paper, Department of Sociology, Addis Ababa University.

ILO (1986), Women's Employment Patterns, Discrimination and Promotion of Equality in Africa (Case study - Ethiopia).

MOLSA (1981), Employment survey in Ethiopia.

MOLSA (1983), Training of Manpower in Ethiopia during 1979/1980.

MOLSA (1993), Women's Advancement in Ethiopia, Women's Affairs Coordinating Office.

MOLSA (1994), Situation Analysis of Employment and Livelihood and Women in Development (draft).

Seyoum Teferra (1991), The Participation of Girls in Higher Education in Ethiopia, IES.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1992), Election Commission Bulletin, Nos. 2, 7 and 8.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), Office of the Prime Minister, National Policy of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), National Social Policy of Ethiopia.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), National Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), Relief and Rehabilitation Policy of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), A National Policy on Ethiopian Women, Addis Ababa.

Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), National Health Policy, Addis Ababa.

Tsion Dessie. Women in Education and Training Issues and Prospect (case study - Ethiopia) (1993).

United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (1984), Rural Progress, Quarterly Bulletin, Nos. 1 and 2.

United Nations Children's Fund (1991), A situation analysis of children and women in Ethiopia.

United Nations Children's Fund (1993), Children and women in Ethiopia, A situation report.

Women's Affairs Office (1993), Profile of Ethiopian Women and Highlights of the National Policy on Ethiopian Women.

Women's Affairs Office (1993), Ethiopia's report for the 1995 Beijing Conference.

Women's Affairs Office (1993), Plan of action for the Women's Affairs Office for the year 1994.

World Bank (1989) Ethiopia: Market Towns Development Project, Infrastructural Operations Division, Eastern Africa, Washington, D.C.